

Testimony on House Bill 2567
to
the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

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Good afternoon, Chairman Powell and members of the committee. I am Erik Wisner, policy and program analyst with the Kansas Department of Agriculture. I am here in support of House Bill 2567, which makes several changes to the Kansas Water Appropriation Act. The bill will provide the agency some fiscal savings but more importantly it also seeks to implement a new statute which helps to ensure the agency has correct information for a water right owner or permit holder.

Last year, KDA was instructed by the Legislative Post Audit committee to develop a list of changes that the agency could implement to trim ten percent of the agency's state general fund expenditures. The agency was able to implement some changes because statutory revisions were not required. Several proposed changes, including the ones described here, require legislative action.

HB 2567 will change the existing requirement that the Chief Engineer send certain notices by certified mail. This change will impact notices sent to water right and permit holders notifying them they have 60 days to request an extension in time to perfect their water right or complete their diversion works. This change also affects the notice sent to a water right holder when no lawful, beneficial use of water has been reported for three successive years. These notifications will still be sent by first-class, postage-prepaid mail as opposed to certified mail. This change will save the department about \$8,650 a year in mailing costs and staff time.

HB 2567 also includes a new statute which requires a person to notify the division of water resources within 60 days if there is a change of ownership or if the name or address of the owner changes. If water right owners are required to provide this information, it will eliminate some uncertainty as to whether the actual water right holder is receiving statutorily-required notices or whether someone other than that person is receiving that important information.

I appreciate the committee taking the time to hear my testimony on HB 2567 and will stand for questions at the appropriate time.